



March 18, 2014

TESTIMONY TO THE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE
IN SUPPORT OF Raised Bill 5574 ***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT BIOSCIENCE CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT REPORT***

Senator LeBeau, Representative Perone, and members of the Commerce Committee, this testimony is a joint submittal by the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region and the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut. My name is Stephen MacKenzie and I am the Executive Director of seCTer. My colleague is Tony Sheridan, President and CEO of the Chamber. We are here to testify in support of Raised Bill 5574 ***AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SOUTHEASTERN CONNECTICUT BIOSCIENCE CAPABILITIES ASSESSMENT REPORT***.

seCTer is a non-profit regional economic development agency incorporated in the State of Connecticut in 1992. It is a 501(C) 3 corporation governed by a board of directors with a membership of approximately 30 individuals representing a broad range of business and public interests. The corporation is the lead economic development agency in the region, promoting business attraction and growth within the 21 municipalities and two tribal nations of New London County.

The Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut is the largest chamber in the region, consisting of 1600 member companies, and whose mission is to support and promote the business community in eastern CT.

Both organizations participated in the preparation and participate in the implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) for our region. A Department of Commerce Program, via the Economic Development Administration (EDA), a CEDS is designed to bring together the public and private sectors in the creation of an economic roadmap to diversify and strengthen regional economies. It analyzes the regional economy and serves as a guide for establishing regional goals and objectives, developing and implementing a regional plan of action, and identifying investment priorities and funding sources.

Raised Bill 5574 with its stated purpose, "To require the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development to issue a request for proposals for a program to promote and support the development of bioscience and biotechnology in the Southeastern Connecticut Planning Region" is completely consistent with our current CEDS, completed in 2011. The Bioscience cluster is one of the key industry clusters for our region. With the recent downsizing of Pfizer, there exists a talented workforce that must be supported, maintained and augmented before they make the decision to leave the state. A formal program supported by DECD that in conjunction with the Bioscience Connecticut Initiative coordinates, fosters and promotes innovation and growth in this cluster is a vital to the SECT economy. Therefore, the Southeastern Connecticut Enterprise Region and the Chamber of Commerce for Eastern Connecticut fully support Raised Bill 5574.

Respectfully submitted,

C. Stephen MacKenzie
Executive Director

Thomas A. (Tony) Sheridan
President and CEO